To Bamboozle with Goodness: The Political Advantages of Christianity in the Thought of Machiavelli*

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It has become axiomatic that Niccolò Machiavelli deplored Christianity and longed for a return to pagan religious practices, which duly appreciated aggressiveness and thisworldly glory. With no less a director than Benedetto Croce,¹ the scholarly chorus performs for students of political philosophy in a relaxing harmony. "Indoctrinated as he was in the pagan revival,"² posits George Sabine; and from Leo Strauss: "That rediscovery which leads up to the demands that the virtue of the ancients be imitated by present-day men, runs counter to the present day religion."³ John Plamenatz says of Machiavelli that "he approved of the religion of the Romans because, in his opinion, it encouraged virtues useful to the republic and created ties to draw the citizens closer together, producing supplementary loyalties to strengthen their patriotism."⁴ And from Quentin Skinner: "The other point at which Machiavelli sought to undermine the prevailing pieties was in discussing the connections between the pursuit of virtù and the requirements of the Christian faith."⁵ In his summary of Machiavelli's religious teaching, J.W. Allen says: "What is needed is a religion that teaches that he who best serves the State best serves the gods."⁶ And finally, Isaiah Berlin argues that the conflict of pagan and Christian virtues is the very crux of Machiavelli's teaching—with Machiavelli's sympathies definitely on the side of the pagan virtues.⁷

Of course, many of these commentators do not deny that Machiavelli discussed the possibilities of using Christianity to political advantage; however, such discussions are most often interpreted as Machiavelli's sad resignation to the fact of Christianity's popularity, and his reluctant admission that if there was to be a religious complement to Machiavellian politics, it necessarily had to be Christian. Plamenatz says of Machiavelli: "Christianity, by his standards, was by no means the best of religions;

* This is the second article that I have written which attempts to reinterpret Machiavelli's teaching in light of his literary works. The first article, which discussed Machiavelli's concept of *Fortuna*, appeared in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 11 (1980), 33–50.

but that does not mean that he wanted to weaken its hold on men, for he had no hope of anything better taking its place."⁸

In this essay, I will argue that Machiavelli's interest in Christianity is inspired by more than mere necessity; for I believe that in the same characteristics which at times cause Machiavelli to dissect critically the Christian liturgy, he sees the potential of a political tool strong enough even to redirect the eroded, perverted Italy of his day—a tool which, if used properly, could be far more effective than its pagan counterpart. For although Machiavelli admires the military stratagems of the ancient Romans in his *Art of War*, he does not hesitate to integrate artillery into the ancient arsenal in order to combat the more formidable modern enemies; and likewise, because of the stronger, more independent wills of his modern constituency (which Machiavelli finds needy of some measure of adjustment) he accepts Christianity as a more potent instrument of control. With both cannons and Christianity, however, the chance of a harmful recoil increases, and Machiavelli's recognition of the political value of Christianity is admittedly surrounded by apprehension.

That I will argue that Machiavelli has a mostly unrecognized appreciation for Christianity does not mean that I intend to argue that he was a Christian. I think that the arguments of writers like Alderisio,⁹ who claim to discover Machiavelli's piety, are too far-fetched to even be worthy of rebuttal. More interesting are the arguments of Toffanin¹⁰ and Ridolfi¹¹ which characterize Machiavelli as a kind of Jesuit who hopes to alter Christian morality to accommodate secular concerns. I will question this characterization with the argument that it is precisely the appearance of secular detachment which, for Machiavelli, makes Christianity such a potent political force. In any case, though, I want to make clear that I am not arguing that Machiavelli's appreciation of Christianity as a political device extends to a more conventional appreciation of Christianity, despite his *Exhortation to Penitence*.

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On the face of it, the proposition that Machiavelli would ever (given the hypothetical situation of really having a choice) choose Christianity over paganism seems untenable. Machiavelli's writings are replete with accolades of the audacious and the fierce, and paganism seems quite supportive of such qualities. In paganism one confronts "the deed of sacrifice, full of blood and ferocity in the slaughter of a multitude of animals; this terrible sight made the men resemble it."¹² The Christian diversion, on the other hand, is described by Machiavelli as encouraging temporal disinterest, and passive resignation:

Our religion has glorified humble and contemplative men rather than active ones. It has, then, set up as the greatest good humility, abjectness and contempt for human things; the other put it in grandeur of mind, in strength of body, and in all the other things apt to make men exceedingly vigorous.¹³

The Christian leaders, in order to maintain any religious legitimacy, are forced by the tenets of Christianity itself to remain aloof from political concerns; and, indeed, Machiavelli's most vociferous criticism of the ecclesiarchs of his time regards their blatant politicization and the unavoidable loss of popular support which such hypocrisy necessarily engenders. The ancient heroes, on the other hand, had little cause to worry about such hypocrisy since their religion did not claim any fundamental dichotomy between the earthly and heavenly cities. When Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, or Theseus found their mystical allure waning under the pressure of day to day political problems, they could, in contrast to Savonarola, resort unabashedly to more conventional political tactics:

Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus could not have gained long-continued observance for their constitutions if they had been unarmed. In our times Fra Girolamo Savonarola was unarmed; hence he was destroyed amid his institutions when they were still new, as soon as the multitude ceased to believe him, because he had no way to keep firm those who had once believed or to make the unbelieving believe.¹⁴

Savonarola proves to be a feeble leader when the need comes for something more than pastoral guidance. His religion encourages favoritism of heavenly over earthly pursuits, and for Savonarola to become embroiled in a blatantly political pursuit would be unacceptably inconsistent.

However, to claim that Machiavelli holds paganism to be unequivocally superior to Christianity would be, I think, somewhat premature. When Machiavelli says of Christianity, "this way of living, then, has made the world weak and turned it over as prey to wicked men, who can in security control it,"¹⁵ I think he is also aware of the possibilities for beneficial rulers facing resistant constituencies. I will examine the possibility that the feebleness that Savonarola represents and encourages can be politically valuable, and that Machiavelli recognizes that value.

Clearly, for Machiavelli, the value of religion as a political tool is in its ability to arouse extra-political sanctions for wholly political operations. As founders, Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, and Theseus all found it easy to enshroud their administrations with holy confirmation. Their populations were naive, and knowing no better, were quick to accept the word of their political authorities when they claimed kinship to the gods. Trickery was common, but not suspected. Regarding the pagan leaders' need for godly blessing before battle, Machiavelli says:

Nonetheless, when reason showed them a thing that ought to be done, notwithstanding that the auspices were adverse, they did it just the same, but with expedients and schemes they turned it around so cleverly that they did not seem to do it with any disrespect to religion.¹⁶

The later historians and biographers, including Machiavelli's revered Livy, and Plutarch, "a very weighty writer,"¹⁷ show some amazement at the naivety of the ancient Roman citizens. Of some of the ancient pagan homilies, Plutarch says: "These stories, laughable as they are, show us the feelings which people then, by force of habit, entertained towards the deity."¹⁸ And Livy, obviously contrasting the innocence of the ancients to his own more wary cohorts, writes about the reception of Proculus Julius recounting his vision of Romulus returning from heaven and telling him exclusively of Rome's glorious future: "It was wonderful how readily the story was credited on this man's word; and how much the grief of the people, and of the army, was assuaged, by their being satisfied of his immortality."¹⁹

This distinction between the novices and veterans of civilized life does not go unnoticed by Machiavelli. He quotes verbatim Livy's reminiscences of the simpler, more pious citizens of the time of the Roman founding: "Not yet this neglect of the favor of the gods, that now possesses the age, had come to pass; nor that each man should make for himself laws suited to interpreting his oath."²⁰ And in a section of his *Discourses* not often cited by the scholars who attribute to Machiavelli an adherence to revived paganism, Machiavelli discusses another pagan prophet, Pompilius Numa, the successor to Romulus in the lineage recounted in Roman yore. Machiavelli, following the other historians, makes it clear that Numa's successful use of the pagan beliefs and practices was in no small part due to the simplicity of his constituency. Uncorrupted by extraneous ideas, the early Romans made the task of governing relatively easy:

To be sure, it is true that since those times were very religious and those men with whom he [Numa] had to labor were untaught, he found it very easy to carry out his designs, since he was able easily to stamp on them any new form whatever. And without doubt anyone who at present wishes to build a state will find it easier among mountaineers, where there is no culture, than among those who are used to living in cities, where culture is corrupt. And a sculptor will more easily get a beautiful statue out of a rough piece of marble than from one badly blocked out by someone else.²¹

When the auguries can no longer be easily manipulated, when the facade of ecclesiastical grace can no longer be automatically assured, and when the populace is no longer blind to the temporal manipulation of "sacred"

visions, the unique advantages of a religious population are lost. According to Machiavelli, with the erosion of religiosity, "men become unbelieving and ready to upset any good custom whatever."²² And this erosion of religiosity seems to be an automatic correlate (at least in pagan states) of civil evolution. Thus, the question becomes: Can a perverted population, an assembly of already sculpted blocks, ever regain the true religiosity necessary to build respect for the "good customs" which are necessary for their reform? In the passage immediately following his discussion of Numa, Machiavelli does give us hope, albeit with reference to a Christian savior, not a pagan one:

And though rude men are more easily won over to a new order or opinion, it is still not for that reason impossible to win over to it also cultured men and those who assume they are not rude. The people of Florence do not suppose themselves either ignorant or rude; nevertheless they were persuaded by Brother Girolamo Savonarola that he spoke with God.²³

I do not think that this shift from a pagan to a Christian archetype is accidental; rather, I think that Machiavelli discovers in Christianity a facility to reshape deformed marble—a facility that is unavailable to paganism.

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It was not inappropriate that Machiavelli chose the name Lucrezia for the femme fatale of his comedy, *Mandragola*. Apart from the more obvious reference to a contemporary of Machiavelli, I think it is interesting, perhaps intended, that we compare the Lucrezia of *Mandragola* to the Lucrezia of ancient Rome (and Livy's *Histories*). Both Lucrezias are renowned beauties, and both gain their stature in the literature by becoming uninterested objects of their worldly suitors' desires. Although both eventually succumb, their fates are otherwise quite different; for despite the fact that Sextus Tarquinius "used every argument likely to have effect on a woman's mind,"²⁴ Livy's Lucrezia is unbending in her resistance. However, despite her equal piousness and virtuosity, Machiavelli's Lucrezia finally cooperates voluntarily, if not amorously, with the "Sextus" of *Mandragola*, Callimaco.

Callimaco's success seems to be due to his employment of a clever henchman, Ligurio, who displays most of the talents recommended for the successful prince.²⁵ Yet in the case of winning Lucrezia's cooperation, Ligurio's brilliance is clearly in his realization that he needed ecclesiastical support for his ploy, and thus, through the careful investment of "alms," Ligurio is able to procure the assistance of one Frate Timoteo. Ligurio realizes that Lucrezia can not be bribed, or browbeaten—her moral good-

ness and adequate intelligence prevent the rogue's approach. Instead, Lucrezia's goodness has to be used against her; her own best judgement can be subordinated only to that authority which she believes to be more godly than her own. Timoteo is well aware that his authority rests in his reputation as one who can determine righteousness better than any member of his flock. He speaks of the necessity for the immaculateness of religion in an extremely literal sense:

I said matins, read a life of the Holy Fathers, went into the church and lit a lamp that had gone out, changed the veil of a Madonna who works miracles. How many times I have told these friars to keep her clean! And then they are puzzled if worship falls off.²⁶

For religion to remain a useful political tool, its shroud of integrity is essential; and for Christianity, with its disclaimer of earthly pursuits, an outward association with mundane politics can not be tolerated.

However, given the secret association of the prince and the prophet, of Ligurio and Timoteo, there seems to be great potential for success—especially in reforming the improperly chiselled blocks of marble. The religious figure, while only covertly negotiating with the politician, can remain outwardly aloof enough to impose the kinds of religious strictures which can sway the most stubborn and cautious of followers. This religious figure, apparently shunning thisworldly reward, retains the ability to convince others that there is a far greater reward—or a far more painful punishment—waiting in the next life.²⁷

Of course, the outward separation of religion and politics must be convincing, as it is in Machiavelli's *Mandragola*. Others have not been as successful as the fictional Ligurio and Timoteo; Machiavelli discusses Pope Julius II, who "with that impetuosity with which he conducted everything,"²⁸ seemed to vacillate between roles as armed politician and unarmed prophet. In a military campaign to drive tyrants out of his sphere of influence, Julius makes an abrupt and imprudent change of strategy:

And having come near Perugia with this purpose and determination, known to everybody, he did not wait until he could enter that city with his army, which could guard him, but entered it unarmed, notwithstanding that Giovampagolo was inside with many soldiers that he had brought together there to defend him.²⁹

Julius survived the episode, but Machiavelli makes it clear that a more courageous foe would not have hesitated to kill the pope, who had impetuously exchanged sword for staff.³⁰

Compare Machiavelli's Lucrezia and Sophocles' Antigone. Certainly both characters represent high moral development, and both are bom-

barded with powerful requests to disavow their moral perceptions. But in the end, as opposed to Lucrezia's submission, Antigone prefers her conscience to the dictates of the newly established political authority. Speaking to her less conscientious sister, Antigone says: "I owe a longer allegiance to the dead than to the living; for with them I shall sleep for all eternity. But you, dishonour the laws of heaven if you must."³¹ For Antigone, there is no higher authority in interpreting the good than her own sense of godliness, and the authority of a newly established political entity has little credibility with which to battle Antigone's commitment, despite his claim of religious authority. To Creon, Antigone responds:

It was not the gods who made that edict; this is not the kind of law that divine Justice, who rules among the dead, ordains for men. I did not think that a mere mortal could make decrees of such power that they could override the unwritten and eternal laws of heaven.³²

Clearly, Antigone is one of those pagans spoken of by Livy, Plutarch, and Machiavelli, who no longer naively accepts the automatic consistency of king and prophet. She knows that the auguries are being manipulated, and she rejects the divine authority of such a blatantly political figure like Creon. J.W. Allen suggests that Machiavelli's interest is in returning to a time where "he who best serves the State best serves the gods."³³ And certainly, Creon uses such an argument in trying to convince Antigone to abide by his edicts: "But whoever loves his country, him will we honour in life or death."³⁴ Yet what Creon and Allen do not fully appreciate is that serving the developed state may demand frequent changes of allegiance and behavior, while serving "the unwritten and eternal laws of heaven" demands consistency and devotion. Thus, paganism, which melds the city and the deities, may promote a good deal of cognitive dissonance during times of political change in mature polities—dissonance which can lead to obstructions like those caused by Antigone.

One wonders if Creon might have been more successful had he the services of someone like Frate Timoteo, and had Antigone been more akin to the more humble nature of Lucrezia and her fellow Christians. Timoteo, using the humble, Christian attributes of Lucrezia, is able to overcome her moral position by offering a competing moral position of higher authority than her own. Thus, she is morally obligated to accept Timoteo's suggestion, and that is why Timoteo can say: "I'll bamboozle her by using her goodness."³⁵ Timoteo, remaining (in Lucrezia's eyes) aloof from Ligurio and political machinations, can continue to represent the timeless and unbending tenets of the Christian religion, and thus avoid the difficulties of the "armed prophet."

I think that Machiavelli recognizes the unique abilities of the priest and

the Christian hierarchy—abilities which depend upon at least an appearance of separation. Armed prophets like Romulus and Numa can successfully combine religion and politics because the short term political aims are not yet inconsistent with religious teachings; however, the Italy of Machiavelli's time, like the mature Rome spoken of by Livy and Plutarch, contains an incredulous citizenry—wise to the unholy alliance of politics and religion. Such a citizenry would find the blatant pagan collusion of prophet and politician “laughable,” and like Antigone, would no longer believe political leaders claiming heavenly endowment. Yet Machiavelli shows that religious sanctions are still available to political leaders, but only if the knowledge of the alliance of political and religious authority is kept from the populace—and only if the fierce individuality of paganism is sacrificed to the inconvenient, but necessary, humble deference of the Christian practice.

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Machiavelli is certain that the sacrifice of some ferocity need not be debilitating. Time and again he blames the particular Christian leaders of his day, and their interpretation of Christianity, for the difficulties encountered. Christianity need not have developed in quite the way that it did; nor should it remain on the present course if it is to be politically constructive. Machiavelli discusses the Christianity of a time past: “If religion of this sort had been kept up among the princes of Christendom, in the form in which its giver grounded it, Christian states and republics would be more united, and much more happy than they are.”³⁶

Contrary to J. Samuel Preus, who argues that the last quotation was Machiavelli's “only concession to the political fruitfulness of Christianity,”³⁷ Machiavelli provides literary evidence (*Mandragola*) and historical evidence of the potentially beneficial contribution of the Christian creed. In his *History of Florence*, Machiavelli frequently mentions the Crusades as an example of Christianity put to good political use. In contrast to the prelates of his Italy, the religious leaders of those earlier centuries were able to channel the Christian rejection of materialism into free military labor rather than passive resignation:

Many Kings and many states joined in contributing money for it, and many individuals without any pay served as soldiers—so powerful then in minds of men was religion, when they were moved by the examples of her leaders.³⁸

Supported by this historical precedent, Machiavelli argues that Christianity can simultaneously encourage the humility and lowliness necessary for reshaping, and maintain enough aggressiveness for the continuation of political aggrandizement. Wars need not be justified only with arguments

of nationalism and imperialism; the crux of the Italians' false interpretation of Christianity is that they do not properly understand their Godly mission:

The pitiable and cruel affliction of miserable mortals, their long distress and suffering without remedy, their lament for countless ills that day and night make them complain, with sobs and distress, with loud voices and sorrowful outcry—each of these asks and beseeches compassion.

This to God is not pleasing, and cannot be to one who of humanity has even a touch. Therefore he has sent us to show you how just is his wrath and his anger, since he sees his kingdom—his flock—disappearing little by little, if the new shepherd does not control it.³⁹

Thus, Machiavelli's interest is in a new Crusade, albeit a crusade which pits God's representatives against the new infidels, not "Italians" against "Turks." If this powerful sanction is used sparingly, Christians can be counted upon to defend God; and if by chance, God's most hallowed constituency just happens to preside on the Italian peninsula, then who can fault the politicians who solidify their own positions as a result of such holy wars? Of course, this powerful political implement, to which Numa and Creon were not privileged, demands careful handling, lest its extraterrestrial power be sacrificed. The incompetent religious leaders since the time of the Crusades grossly misused the Crusade mentality by flaunting their political objectives and destroying any possibility of a belief in Godly ratification:

Pope Boniface . . . undertook to get rid of the Colonna; besides excommunicating them, he proclaimed a crusade against them. This, though it somewhat injured them, injured the Church still more, because that weapon which through love of the Faith he might have used effectively, when through personal ambition it was turned against Christians, began to stop cutting.⁴⁰

In order for the Christian mechanism to be effective, the crusade must employ the otherworldly considerations of the devoted. It is only when the ecclesiastical leaders misuse and thus forfeit their unique capabilities that Machiavelli objects to the Christian practices. Politicians can display ambition, but ecclesiarchs must not. And politicians must be very wary of the frequency with which they employ religious sanctions, and they must take heed that the object of the sanctions is an appropriate target of religious indignation—lest the separation which is unavailable to paganism be seen for what is really is—no separation at all. Machiavelli laments that during his day, the power of the proper Christian sects, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, was being squandered in support of the remaining Christian perversions. Still, no better example proves Machiavelli's commitment to the potential of Christianity as a political

device and the power of Christian priests in maintaining allegiance; for if a certain minority sect could maintain devotion to the remaining nefariousness, then the potential for Christianity in a more suitable regime certainly seems bright. Speaking of the Franciscans and Dominicans, Machiavelli says:

The power of their new orders is the reason why the improbity of the prelates and the heads of our religion does not ruin it; for still living in poverty and having great influence with the people because of hearing confession and preaching, they give them to understand that it is evil to speak evil of what is evil, and that it is good to live under the prelates' control and, if prelates make errors, to leave them to God for punishment.⁴¹

Machiavelli makes heroes of the armed prophets, but they are not necessarily templates for action in the present. Machiavelli's nostalgic retreats into the past should not automatically be considered remedies for the present. Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, and Theseus (and Numa) were innovators, and as such, they had the luxury (although mixed with a great many liabilities) of working with raw, unshaped human materials. When they needed the extra awe of a religious decree, they issued it themselves; and when they needed to fortify the commitment to a religious oath with a sword, they did so.⁴² But Machiavelli's understanding of Livy, Numa, and Savonarola, and his lesson in *Mandragola*, all point to Machiavelli's appreciation of the limited efficacy of the armed prophet. Surely, Machiavelli is critical of the effeminacy of Christianity, and cautions about its political use; but drastic problems demand drastic solutions. And to repair the deformities of the citizens surrounding him, Machiavelli suggests the utilization of the very qualities of Christianity that in another environment he would despise—lowliness, humility, and deference—to overcome and reform the incredulousness of the people. This is not necessarily disastrous, however, because he also shows how these characteristics might be integrated in a strategy of political aggressiveness.

Mandragola shows the way; it suggests a covert collusion between the armed politician and the unarmed "prophet." The unarmed prophet, by not engaging in day to day political affairs, would not be accused of temporal aggrandizement when secretly promoting the aims of the armed politician through careful manipulation of the church doctrine. And that the unarmed prophet can retain the position of respect necessary for a deferential audience is secured by particular characteristics of the Christian creed that are anathema to paganism. And, finally, the temporal weaknesses of the prophet (i.e. Savonarola) can be protected by the strong leader, who no longer has to worry so much about political and religious consistency. Savonarola's mistake is not that he remains unarmed, but that he does not form a secret alliance with a capable prince.

Since Croce, many have argued that Machiavelli was the first to divorce politics from moral and religious concerns. Yet in fact Machiavelli's lesson may have been even more radical; for what he suggests is a particular kind of separation, whereby the religious and moral teachings are not independent, but are secretly directed by political authorities. It is no small irony, then, that one of the pioneers of the church-state dichotomy, in contrast to some of his Northern successors, suggests the division not to divert political authority, but to enhance it.

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Notes

- 1 See "Machiavelli e Vico," in *Filosofia, Poesia, Storia* (Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, n.d.), pp. 583-587. See esp. p. 585.
- 2 George H. Sabine and Thomas L. Thorson, *A History of Political Theory*, 4th ed. (Hinsdale, Illinois: Dryden Press, 1973), p. 335.
- 3 Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, eds., *History of Political Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972), p. 281.
- 4 John Plamenatz, *Man and Society*, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 1:32.
- 5 Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 1:182.
- 6 J.W. Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Methuen and Company, 1941), p. 459.
- 7 See "The Originality of Machiavelli," in *Against the Current*, ed. Henry Hardy (New York: Penguin, 1982), pp. 25-79.
- 8 Plamenatz, *Man and Society*, 1:36.
- 9 See Felice Alderisio, *Machiavelli: L'Arte Dello Stato Nell'Azione e Negli scritti* (Turin: Fratelli Bocca Editore, 1930). See esp. pp. 217-256.
- 10 See Giuseppe Toffanin, *La Fine Dell'Umanesimo* (Turin: Fratelli Bocca Editore, 1920).
- 11 See Roberto Ridolfi, *The Life of Niccolò Machiavelli*, trans. Cecil Grayson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963).
- 12 Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Chief Works and Others*, 3 vols., trans. Allan Gilbert (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1965), 1:331. Hereinafter I will cite this work as *Works*, and when possible, provide parenthetical reference to Books and Chapters in the original, along with a volume and page citation of the Feltrinelli edition of Machiavelli's *Opere*, i.e., (*Discourses* 2.2; *Opere* I, p. 282).
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid., 1:26-27. (*Prince* 6; *Opere* I, p. 32).
- 15 Ibid., 1:331. (*Discourses* 2.2; *Opere* I, p. 282).
- 16 Ibid., 1:232. (*Discourses* 1.14; *Opere* I, p. 170).
- 17 Ibid., 1:324. (*Discourses* 2.1; *Opere* I, p. 275).
- 18 Plutarchus, *Plutarch's Lives and Writings*, 5 vols., trans. A.H. Clough (Boston: Little-Brown, 1909), 1:150.
- 19 Titus Livius, *The History of Rome*, 2 vols., trans. George Baker (New York: H.W. Derby, 1861), 1:28-29.
- 20 *Works*, 1:231. (*Discourses* 1.13; *Opere* I, p. 169).
- 21 Ibid., 1:225. (*Discourses* 1.11; *Opere* I, p. 162).
- 22 Ibid., 1:227. (*Discourses*, 1.12; *Opere* I, p. 164).

- 23 Ibid., 1:226. (*Discourses* 1.11; *Opere* I, pp. 162-163).
- 24 Livy, *History of Rome*, 1:56.
- 25 For a discussion of the political significance of *Mandragola*, see the author's article mentioned in the opening footnote.
- 26 *Works*, 2:815. (*Mandragola* 5.1; *Opere* VIII, p. 105).
- 27 Some commentators cannot accept that priests, too, can contribute to the political good by committing acts of moral depravity. Renaudet, for example, lumps the clever and obviously Machiavellian Timoteo with the incompetent clergy mentioned by Machiavelli as responsible for Italy's lack of progress. Clearly, both Timoteo and the bulk of the Italian clergy (as Machiavelli saw them) were irreligious. However, and this is what Renaudet does not seem to see, Timoteo's irreligiosity was politically beneficial while the other clergy's was not. See: Augustin Renaudet, *Machiavel* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1956), pp. 45-46.
- 28 *Works*, 1:254-255. (*Discourses* 1.27; *Opere* I, p. 195).
- 29 Ibid., 1:254. (*Discourses* 1.27; *Opere* I, p. 195).
- 30 Ibid., 1:255. (*Discourses* 1.27; *Opere* I, pp. 195-196).
- 31 Sophocles, *Antigone* (trans. F. Kinchin Smith), vv. 75-77.
- 32 Ibid., vv. 451-456.
- 33 Allen, *Sixteenth Century*, p. 459. Neither does Berlin appreciate the impossibility of uniting the state and the gods in a sophisticated polity. He says: "If human beings were different from what they are, perhaps they could create an ideal Christian society." (Berlin, "Originality," p. 46). In light of Machiavelli's comments on Numa and the unchiselled marble, I think that (at least for the Florence of Machiavelli's day) the word "pagan" might be a good substitute for "Christian" in the preceding quotation.
- 34 *Antigone*, vv. 206-207.
- 35 *Chief Works*, 1:800. (*Mandragola* 3.9; *Opere* VIII, p. 87).
- 36 Ibid., 1:228. (*Discourses* 1.12; *Opere* I, p. 165). Some commentators dismiss this and other similar comments by Machiavelli as an attempt to tone down his heretical perspective. J. Samuel Preus simply finds him "hard to believe," when he makes a distinction between Christianity and its Florentine manifestation. Yet if Machiavelli was afraid of recrimination, surely he would not have thought his fate could be made better by saying that it was not really Christianity that was bad, but only the present group of openly appetitive, incompetent, licentious boors who stood atop the institution. See: J. Samuel Preus, "Machiavelli's Functional Analysis of Religion: Context and Object," *JHI* 40 (1979), 185.
- 37 Preus, "Machiavelli's Functional Analysis," p. 185.
- 38 *Chief Works*, 3:1054. (*History of Florence* 1.17; *Opere* VII, p. 102).
- 39 Ibid., 2:880. (*Carnival Songs* 3, "By the Blessed Spirit"; *Opere* VIII, p. 332).
- 40 Ibid., 3:1063. (*History of Florence* 1.25; *Opere* VII, p. 115).
- 41 Ibid., 1:422. (*Discourses* 3.1; *Opere* I, pp. 382-383).
- 42 A good example of the mixture of religion and politics by the pagans is the oath-making ritual of the Samnites: "And when some of them were terrified and unwilling to swear, at once their centurions killed them; hence those who came next, horrified by the savage spectacle, all took the oath." Ibid., 1:234. (*Discourses* 1.15; *Opere* I, p. 172).